Purpose
The purpose of a breeding colony protocol is to generate animals for use in approved experimental protocols. Principal investigators (PIs) wishing to establish a breeding colony at any TTUHSC El Paso campus facility must submit a breeding protocol application to the IACUC. Breeding colony protocols can be submitted separately from experimental protocols, or they can be included in the same protocol.

Record keeping
Once the breeding colony has been established, an animal use record must be maintained by the PI. This record will include the number and disposition of all animals used on the protocol. The staff of the IACUC and LARC can advise investigators about the required colony records, however the ultimate responsibility for keeping these records remains with the PI.

It is recognized that animals will enter and exit the breeding program over the life of a breeding protocol. However, every animal used on the breeding protocol must be accounted for. Animal numbers in the application should reflect the total number of animals required over the three-year period for which the protocol is approved, not the number of animals in the colony at any given time.

Species-specific weaning procedures

Mice and Rats: All weaning must take place no later than day 21 unless an exception is granted by the IACUC. To clarify how to count days: the date of an animal’s birth is DAY 0, therefore DAY 21 is 21 days from the date of its birth. In the case of runts that are too small to survive independently at 21 days, an extension to wean may be granted by permission of the institutional veterinarian. If such extensions are anticipated (for example, if a strain consistently produces pups that are not independently viable at 21 days), the PI must include the contingency in his/her IACUC-approved protocol.

Ferrets: Ferrets should be weaned at 6 – 8 weeks of age, unless an exception is granted by the IACUC.

Zebrafish: Zebrafish are external fertilizers. After the fish lay and fertilize the eggs, the parents should be separated from the eggs by an insert, to prevent them from eating the eggs.

Related policies
Investigators must comply with all other institutional policies at TTUHSC El Paso and Federal Guidelines. This list includes, but is not limited to, the following:

IACUC Policy 12: Procurement, Housing and Accountability for the Use of Live Vertebrate Animals
IACUC Policy 16: Tail Snipping and Tail Biopsy of Rodents
IACUC Policy 17: Use of Fertilized and Embryonated Avian Eggs
IACUC Policy 18: Frog Oocyte Harvest
LARC Mouse Housing Density and Breeding Schemes Policy
LARC Policy on Overcrowded Cages

Reviewed and Approved by the TTUHSCEP IACUC: 04/08/2022